



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

New England Field Office
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300
Concord, NH 03301-5087
<http://www.fws.gov/newengland>



June 3, 2013

Mark Alexander
Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
P.O. Box 317546
Newington, Connecticut 06131-7546

Dear Mr. Alexander:

This responds to your May 16, 2013 letter, requesting that we review your conclusion that the proposed runway improvement project at Igor I. Sikorsky Memorial Airport (Sikorsky Airport) in Stratford, Connecticut is not likely to adversely affect the federally threatened piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*). Our comments are provided in accordance with the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended: 16 U.S.C 1531, *et seq.*).

Piping plovers are known to occur on Long Beach, in the vicinity of the Sikorsky Airport property. In our letters dated July 17, 1998 and February 16, 2010, we conditionally concluded that proposed improvements to Runway 6-24 were not likely to adversely affect piping plovers. In our February 16, 2010 letter, we recommended that the approach elevation over Milford remain at 200 feet above mean sea level or greater in order to avoid adversely affecting breeding piping plovers at Milford Point.

We have reviewed the species and project-related information provided in your May 16, 2013 letter, and we agree that adverse effects from the runway improvement project are not likely to occur. Construction activities will not be located in or near piping plover habitat, the MALSF lighting system is no longer a part of the project, and the approach elevation over Milford Point will remain at 200 feet above mean sea level. Therefore, any adverse effects from the runway improvement construction and operation of the runway are anticipated to be discountable (extremely unlikely to occur) or insignificant (size of impact never reaches the level where take is expected to occur).

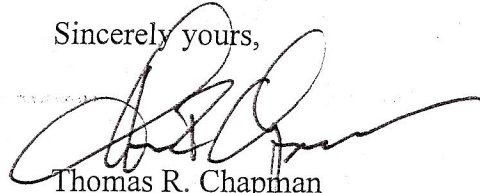
Further consultation with us under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act is not required at this time. Should project plans change, or additional information on listed species becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered.

Mark Alexander
June 3, 2013

2

Thank you for your cooperation, and please contact Ms. Susi von Oettingen at (603) 223-2541, extension 22, if you need further assistance.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Chapman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thomas R. Chapman
Supervisor
New England Field Office